

MLI Mission (slides one and two):

Ministry Leadership Initiative develops authentic, intentional, and highly proficient leadership, sharing the love and grace of Jesus Christ with young people

Purpose of the Report (slide three):

MLI is engaged in a consulting partnership to evaluate and help revitalize the faith formation program at Hosanna! Lutheran Church of Liberty, Missouri

Context of Ministry with Young People (slides four and five):

Young people who grow up in a church are more likely to excel in school, less likely to engage in risky behavior, and they become happier adults. (According to studies by Univ. of Penn., Baylor Univ., and Harvard Univ., 2011–2018.)

Some Questions Identified by the Council (slide six):

- Is the faith formation model sustainable?
- How will the church engage families in returning to weekly faith formation programming?
- How might the church motivate additional members to become involved as volunteers?
- What are some innovative ways the church could implement in providing faith formation?

The Published Study and Report is 24 Pages and is Available Online; This Presentation is a Summary (slide seven)

How MLI Conducts a Consulting Report (slide eight):

- Gather data with an online survey (we received 35 submissions)
- Conduct listening sessions with the Council, congregation, CE cmte, and other parties (30 participants)
- Research statistics and interview pastors and educators at peer congregations
- Make interpretations of the data; form and test recommendations
- Present the findings in a published report and provide follow-up support

Observed Strengths of Hosanna! Lutheran Church (slides nine through 12):

- Rev. Mike Kern is a Gifted Pastor
- Exemplary Intergenerational Worship
- Regular and Repeatable Special Events
- Communication
- Church Campus and Location
- Members of All Ages Love and Support Children

Identifiable Challenges of the Faith Formation Program (slide 13):

- The Pandemic has Created a Difficult Era
- Sunday School Model
- Recruiting, Nurturing, and Retaining Volunteers
- Opportunities for Teenage Students
- Faith Formation (Christian Education) Committee
- Working Hard and the Risk of Burnout
- Finding Other Community Resources

Two Primary Interpretations from the Study (slides 14 and 15):

- Adaptable Work is Required
 - The process will take time. It will require additional interpretations and decisions. Members of the church leadership teams will need to experiment beyond their comfort zones to try new things toward a collective purpose.
- The Faith Formation Model may be Outdated
 - MLI is interpreting that Hosanna! Lutheran Church is utilizing a faith formation model that was designed for twice the number of participating children (see backing research in this section).

Strategic Recommendations from MLI (slides 16–31):

MLI recommends, as a summary of the previous section, the following strategic programming interventions. This is listed in a general order of logic, but not priority:

- Divide Classes into Sustainable Sizes
- Consider a Once-a-Month Intergenerational Class
- Utilize the Art of Testimony
- Revise the Faith Formation Committee
- Efficiently Train and Utilize Volunteers to Serve (see breakout information below***)
 - Create a team of people willing to give a concentrated amount of time
 - Ask this team to create:
 - A list of volunteer needs in faith formation
 - Job descriptions, including time expectations
 - A list of people to recruit for each specific job
 - A list of who will be contacting these recruits
 - Recruit volunteers specifically for a job they are equipped to do
 - Create job descriptions for each volunteer position
 - “Ask with your face” so that there is a stronger engagement and relationship
 - Use Signup Genius because it is helpful for organizing volunteers
 - Encourage parents to become involved
- Retire Some Programs to Strengthen Others
- Experiment, Embrace Failures, and Learn
- Continue to Adaptively Respond to the Pandemic

Suggested Timeline Phase One, Introducing the Report (slide 32):

- MLI Faculty would lead a review of the report
- Change the name of the Christian Education Cmte to Faith Formation Cmte
- Pivot the purposes of the committee, based on this report
- Initiate a volunteer recruitment plan

Suggested Timeline Phase Two, Building the Team (slide 33):

- Integrate “art of testimony” into worship services
- Invite specific leaders to share faith stories in highlight roles
- Make progress on volunteer recruitment, training, and screening
- Evaluate the calendar to prune and refocus annual events

Suggested Timeline Phase Three, Experimentation and Evaluation (slide 34):

- Committee would pick a date to retool the size of classes
- Begin a monthly intergenerational faith formation hour
- Embrace experimentation and evaluation, expect success and failure
- Celebrate the end of the school year with volunteer appreciation

Conclusion and Other Resources (slide 35):

- MLI will coach the church leadership through the end of 2021, and is available in 2022
- The work is yours, so modify and edit the report to best fit your changing and evolving needs
- Consider what we learned from the three case studies, published at the end of the report
- Hosanna! is a wonderful place, so live into your mission of sharing “joy and faith for all!”

Ministry Leadership Initiative Contact Information (slides 36–37):

- Emily Nelson Dixon and Matt Vaughan share appreciation and encouragement with Hosanna!
- Ministry Leadership Initiative is online at: ministryleading.org
- Contact Matt: 913/972.2530 or matt@ministryleading.org

